

Salt Management Strategy (SaMS)

4th Salt Tracking and Reporting Workgroup Meeting

January 9, 2020

The fourth meeting for the Salt Tracking and Reporting Workgroup for the Salt Management Strategy (SaMS) was held from 1:00 pm – 3:30 pm on January 9, 2020, at Fairfax Water's Griffith Water Treatment Plant (9600 Ox Road, Lorton, Virginia).

Attendance

Twelve individuals, including two Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) staff and one staff from the Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin (ICPRB; DEQ's contractual support), participated in the meeting.

Scott Crofton, VDOT
Satoshi Eto, Fairfax City
Dave Evans, DEQ*
Jeremy Hassan, Arlington County
Herb Holmes, City of Alexandria
Marty Hurd, Fairfax County

Neely Law, Center for Watershed Protection
Dave Lincoln, Friends of Accotink Creekⁱⁱ
Merrily Pierce, McLean Citizens Association
Niffy Saji, Fairfax Water
Erfaneh Sharifi, ICPRB*
Sarah Sivers, DEQ*

* Facilitator

ⁱⁱ Participated via conference call

Meeting Highlights

At this meeting, workgroup members reviewed highlights from its 3rd meeting and the changes to the tracking form since the last meeting, considered input from other workgroups, discussed how to address the recommendations and resources in the final SaMS document, and identified incentives and opportunities for voluntary tracking of salt use. Meeting discussions focused on finalizing the salt tracking and reporting workgroup recommendations, including:

- identifying final improvements to the tracking forms including operations tracking, storm tracking, product uses, BMP implementation, and
- presenting this workgroup's content in the SaMS report.

Notes for Other Workgroups / Potential Areas of Overlap:

- Traditional BMPs Workgroup: the BMP and Storm elements in the tracking forms match the information for these areas in the Traditional BMP workgroup's products.
- Water Quality Monitoring and Research Workgroup: geographic and storm-specific information needed for a pilot monitoring program to link operational practices to water quality can be provided through use of the detailed (storm-specific, route/property-specific) tracking elements.

Follow-up Action Items:

- Modifications to the reporting forms will be made per the workgroup's recommendations and edits. DEQ will modify the forms and will send them to the workgroup members for their final review.

- Dave Lincoln offered to help organizations adapt the form to work best for their operations.

Meeting Summary

Introductions

The meeting opened with brief introductory remarks from DEQ. Participants then briefly introduced themselves, providing their name and the organization they represent.

The third Salt Tracking and Reporting Workgroup meeting highlights, workgroup action items, and notes from other workgroups were reviewed – they are available [online](#).

Discussion topics at the meeting focused on the salt use reporting forms, including the organization of the form, formatting, capabilities, and suggested phrasing of recommendations in the final SaMS document (toolkit).

Salt Use Tracking Form Discussion

Dave Evans, DEQ, facilitated final review of the content and format of each section of the salt use tracking forms.

Discussion points:

- The forms are detailed and may be difficult for many users. The data dictionary could clarify what information is more critical and valuable. For example, the area treated and salt use amounts are critical tracking elements.
- A workgroup member recommended using a simplified version of the tracking form for a volunteer-based organization (e.g. HOAs).
- A question was raised about how to incorporate contractors' reports in this form (to ensure their work is captured, but not double counted). The workgroup envisioned contractor work being reported by the public organizations employing them.
- Arlington County covers transportation, property management, and bus stops during winter maintenance, and would like the forms to enable such sub-organizational tracking
- Data compatibility is a key concern (e.g. reporting units). Having a drop-down menu to choose from will be helpful.
- The workgroup members discussed the 3-5 most important pieces ("core elements") to be included in the forms by all organizations. SaMS should recommend all organizations track the core elements, along with whatever else they choose to document.
- These forms need to be "test-driven". This winter's storms are opportunities to use these forms.
- The form is a "vehicle" to show a comprehensive menu of tracking information in spreadsheet format. Organizations may identify the most valuable information to track for their purposes and each entity may adapt the form and data dictionary to meet its own needs.
- To capture the geographic information needs for detailed future analysis (such as the water quality pilot proposal), breaking down the information by sub-organization units such as transportation routes or property management groupings will be helpful.

Operations Tracking

- A dropdown list in the spreadsheet form for geographic areas of operations would be helpful.

- Bike trails and bus stops could be in the “other property” category, add another “other property” category to accommodate their tracking. Detailed Tracking
- Levels of service differ for different properties. Hospitals, police stations, and fire stations have a higher level of service than other areas.
- It would be helpful to have forms tailored for transportation, HOA, and property management.
- There is a need to add instructions to explain how to report detailed data on routes/property groupings and product use to ensure accurate and consistent tracking.
- Consider adding an organization subcomponent to facilitate tracking for specific areas of responsibility within an organization (i.e., bus stops, trails, etc.).

Product Use

- Consider adding entry or note field for the percentage of salt in brine solutions.
- Tracking brine use seasonally will be easier than reporting it for each storm.
- Consider adding more rows to identify additional deicer products.
- A drop-down menu for products would be valuable, and could reduce the number of rows needed in the spreadsheet.

Storm Reporting

- A question was raised about the start/end of the storm. “Is it deployment (start of storm operations) or precipitation?” To allow for both consider adding two more rows.
- Add a full/partial operation deployment line to the storm reporting tab.
- Number of storm operation deployments and seasonal totals of all products used are the core elements of storm tracking and product use tab.

BMPs Implementation

- Levels of service could be more clearly communicated/labeled in the spreadsheet and should be explained well in the data dictionary.
- From BMP tracking, add “is this practice used?” for a “yes/no” response to the BMPs implementation tab. If the answer is yes, respond to “briefly describe effectiveness”
- Impediments to BMP use would be best addressed in a separate column..

Encouraging Tracking and Reporting

The workgroup briefly discussed the reasons and incentives for tracking activities, and members shared the following observations:

- Detailed tracking could potentially support future FEMA disaster response reimbursement requests. Documentation is needed for reimbursement and support from FEMA.
- The Salt Institute has reported cost-savings linked to tracking and reporting, along with reduced environmental impacts. These benefits should be of interest to many, including Chambers of Commerce (COC) and HOAs.
- Participants in a “Green COC” initiative may be especially receptive to the potential benefits associated with tracking BMPs and salt use.
- Tracking enables sharing experiences and brings opportunities to learn from each other.
- As public awareness of the environmental impacts of salt use grows, tracking enables the organizations to have better information to respond to public concerns.

Final Recommendations

Finally, the workgroup discussed the final recommendations, including interest in a database version of forms and language in the SaMS report.

- “Core” tracking elements: in the course of detailed discussions described above, the workgroup identified (1) Organization name and its geographic area(s) of operation, (2) Operational areas(s), both transportation and property management, (3) the # of Storm deployments, (4) total seasonal Products used, and (5) BMP implementation as the most critical SaMS tracking information.
- Organizations are encouraged to adapt the forms to meet their organization’s needs, and Dave Lincoln offered to provide his assistance to those interested.
- There is a need for a complete glossary to be added to the tracking form.
- Organizations should work with the forms this winter, and improve them for their future use based on their own experiences, practices, and requirements.
- DEQ observed that creating standard forms for specific audiences (HOAs, small local governments, etc.) could be addressed in the future during SaMS implementation.

Meeting Wrap-up:

This was the fourth and final meeting of the Salt Tracking and Reporting Workgroup. The next SAC meeting will be held in September 2020. Steering Committee meetings will be held in June and August 2020.

DEQ will apply the workgroup’s comments and edits on the tracking forms and will send them for final revision to workgroup members via email.

Handouts from the meeting are available on the SaMS Meeting Materials [website](#).

All information, questions, additional resources, etc. should be emailed to Dave Evans (david.evans@deq.virginia.gov) and Sarah Sivers (sarah.sivers@deq.virginia.gov) to reduce email traffic among EOWG members.

Meeting notes were prepared and submitted by the Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin.

Additional Feedback Contributed to the Follow Up Survey:

A survey was shared with workgroup members following the meeting to capture any additional thoughts members may have had following the meeting. Feedback is arranged below based on the sections of the agenda. Only sections where additional thoughts were provided are included: